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GEOGRAPHIC INTELLIGENCE REPORT

LAND MINES IN EGYPT AND LIBYA

CIA/RR-GR-138

November 1956

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND REPORTS

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LAND MINES IN EGYPT AND LIBYA

I. Introduction

Land mines placed during World War II are a threat to field operations in many areas of northwestern Egypt and northern Libya. North of 28°N and west of Alexandria, antipersonnel and antitank mines are encountered in well executed patterns as well as in haphazard positions originally prepared for their harassing value. In addition, booby traps are frequently associated with both buried mines and those found on the surface of the ground. The locations of many minefields are known, but relatively few of them have been adequately marked. Recent casualty reports indicate clearly that the location of many mines is not known today. The concern over the mine problem on the part of oil companies that hold concessions in the Western Desert of Egypt and in northern Libya is evident in the large sums currently being budgeted for mine sweeping operations. As a result of these programs, many areas will eventually be investigated, but at present the land mine must be considered a hazard throughout this broad expanse of desert terrain.

II. Dangers Presented by Land Mines

A. Nature of World War II Operations

The current problem of land mines stems from their wide use as a defensive measure during the campaigns of World War II. The British, the Germans, and the Italians all laid and relaid large numbers of mines as the course of battle ran back and forth across western Egypt and Libya. In 1954, one estimate placed the number of unrecovered mines in Egypt alone at 10,000,000. General Rommel estimated that the German line at

El Alamein contained 500,000 mines and that in one sector there were as many as 150,000. These figures do not include the defensive system of even greater depth laid out by the British at El Alamein. Intricate fields similar to the El Alamein defenses, though on a smaller scale, were laid at numerous points across the coastal areas of Egypt and Libya.

Minefields, however, are not limited to coastal areas. In some instances--as at El Alamein and at El Agheila, south of the Bay of Sirte--mine fields form a dense barrier extending inland for 20 to 30 miles. Smaller, but no less lethal, concentrations are encountered in settlements, around former landing grounds, at water points, and on roads in widely scattered places throughout the area north of 28°N.

The placement of mines was influenced greatly by terrain and going conditions. Any situation that permits easy movement of tanks and trucks may be mined if sand or soil is present to a depth sufficient to conceal a mine. Much of the terrain of northern Libya and the Western Desert of Egypt meets these conditions, and it was in these areas that the mine was employed as a major defense against rapidly executed tank movement. In difficult terrain, wadi beds and saddles are the most dangerous areas. When tank units pulled into bivouac areas or assumed defensive positions, they often hastily placed a perimeter of mines and mined any defiladed approaches to their position. The results of such operations are widely scattered. The Germans were consistent in mining the west banks of wadis to deny hull-down tank positions to the British. Positions that provide a

commanding view and could have been used as observations posts were often mined and booby trapped as were also the approaches to such sites. Unfortunately, most of the sites that were valued in terms of World War II campaigns are of value to field operations today, and these areas are particularly hazardous.

Minefields incorporated into major defensive positions were carefully plotted and in some instances have become known through examination of unit records and accounts of major engagements. An undetermined number of these detailed records were destroyed in battle or were subsequently lost in the confused mass of captured documents. It is likely, however, that in many instances no records were made. Mines were often put out as stop-gap measures, as for local security during an overnight stop, and forgotten when the unit moved out. During the final German retreat, mines were placed at random in any position that might be of use to the British; many were booby trapped. The problem of avoiding mined areas is further complicated because unit commanders often employed unorthodox patterns to confuse the enemy.

B. Types of Mines and Current Condition

Mines in northern Africa vary greatly in type and current condition. As many as 17 types of antitank and antipersonnel mines with a variety of fuse types were placed in this area in World War II. Supply dumps changed hands fairly frequently, and units in the field often used whatever weapons and ammunition were available to them at a particular time. Consequently, individual mines of British, French, German, and Italian manufacture were placed by both sides.

Most German mines were of either the Teller antitank or the "bounding Betty" antipersonnel types. The latter springs up waist high, detonates, and throws steel over a wide area. The antipersonnel mine was generally employed on the fringe of an antitank concentration. It is known that the Germans and Italians buried British aerial bombs and artillery shells. Some were fused to detonate with the release of pressure, others to explode with application of pressure. At times, they were laid directly beneath conventional mines. Booby traps were also placed on mines stacked above the ground or on isolated mines placed on the surface of the ground. Walls, buildings, and barbed wire fences were also commonly fitted with booby traps of infinite variety. It is believed that all the mines employed in this area can be readily identified with the proper equipment and that plastic types, which are more difficult to detect electronically, are not likely to be encountered.

World War II mines have aged and currently have a wide range of sensitivity. In some instances the nitroglycerin in the charges has collected into droplets that will detonate with a slight jar; in other instances the charge remains stable and the firing mechanisms have become rusted and clogged with silt and sand to such an extent that the mine is rendered inoperative. Changes in the pressure ratings of some of the firing devices have also occured. For example, Italian mines that once required a pressure of 250 pounds for detonation are now touched off with a pressure as low as 50 pounds. Some types of mines have become so sensitive that they detonate

without external stimulation. Because of the wide range of triggering devices and the unpredictable condition of the mines themselves, molesting a mine may be dangerous.

An equally dangerous device, the "butterfly bomb", is also found in the area. This antipersonnel bomb has a light case containing a charge and many small pieces of steel. It is found sticking into the ground, perhaps partially concealed by brush, and goes off if disturbed in any way.

C. Movement in Mined Areas

In Libya north of 28°N and east of approximately 13°E and in Egypt north of 28°N and west of Alexandria, mines may be encountered at almost any point. The uncertainty of travel in these desert areas is increased because mined areas cannot be precisely delimited. The sites most likely to contain mines are flat, soil-covered stretches that provide good vehicular movement, wadi beds (particularly in rough terrain and long the coast), areas around wells and cisterns, abandoned buildings, and locations that provide a commanding view of surrounding terrain. The main roads and tracks in use during war years were mined. The road surface and shoulders of major routes along the coast and some inland roads have been swept, but movement more than a few feet from the road invites trouble. Local people made new tracks after the war and abandoned those known to have been mined during the war years. There is less danger of hidden mines where wind erosion has stripped the surface of sand and soil.

Well-defined and recently traveled tracks are the safest routes to follow. Tire marks left by a single vehicle, however, are not evidence

that the route is necessarily safe for a second vehicle even if exact alignment is maintained; the lighter of the two vehicles may pass over a mine safely, whereas the heavier may detonate it. A camel track with a few prints may be misleading; a camel may have missed a mine by inches. If tracks have been obliterated by dust storms or the wash from the infrequent rainfall, it is advisable to wait until the track has been rebroken by persons familiar with the area--a well established track may pass a few feet from a minefield. Travel should not be attempted at night unless the sweeping of the route has been confirmed by reliable sources. If the track is lost, travel should not be resumed until daylight. Mines buried under drifts of sand may be missed during sweeping operations, and at a later date may be uncovered to an extent that makes them dangerous once again. In some instances, wind erosion will expose individual mines and indicate the pattern of a mine field. Oil company personnel have found that, when visibility is good, minefields may be detected from the air at low altitudes by noting regular patterns in soil-color differences.

A few simple precautions can make movement relatively safe if the presence of mines is suspected. At the first indication that mines are present, all movement should stop and no member of the party should move until the path has been probed. The site of a forced landing should be probed before unrestricted movement around the aircraft is attempted.

Probing a path through a mine field is exhausting work and cannot be hurried, but is worth the effort if time permits. One piece of equipment is required, a slim metal rod 18 to 24 inches in length with one pointed tip--a long screw driver could be used. A ball of string is useful for marking the route cleared. The probe, held at an angle of 30° to 45° from

the horizontal, is probed slowly into the ground as far as possible. At the proper angle, a probe is not likely to set off a mine it contacts. A gentle movement of the rod is essential; a stabbing movement may be fatal. Probing should be conducted in a pattern, with intervals of about 3 inches across the path to be traveled. If a solid object is encountered, probing at this interval will provide an estimate of its size and give some indication of the nature of its surface. If any doubt exists as to the nature of the object, detour around it. No attempt should be made to remove a mine. As a safe area is defined by probing, it may be marked by string or rows of stones--stones are superior to string for recognition after dark. Under favorable conditions, probing may be done at night, though random movement in unfamiliar territory is not safe.

III. Egypt

A. Mine Clearing Activity

1. Operations of the Egyptian Government

The Egyptian government has made little effort to clear mines and other explosive materials from the Western Desert. In March 1955 the Egyptian press announced that the Director General of the Frontier Forces had been authorized to sign an agreement with an Italian firm to clear all land mines from the Western Desert. At that time the president of an American oil company indicated that, to his knowledge, the Italian firm would be engaged primarily in collecting mines cleared by the oil company and other types of scrap metal found in the area. Although the Italian firm stated that it was prepared to begin operations at the time of the

press release, no later information on the operation is available. In all probability this operation resulted in little, if any, mine clearance.

In addition to countless buried mines, a considerable quantity of mines stacked on the surface of the ground, scrap metal from vehicles and tanks, and stacks of ammunition are found in the battle area south of El Alamein. Local Bedouin have stripped compression rings from projectiles and have collected other pieces of brass, which are of value on the local market. Except for this precarious activity, abandoned war material in the Western Desert was largely undisturbed until preparations for oil exploration began in late 1954.

2. Oil Company Operations

a. Extent of the Program

An operating company for American concessionaires has undertaken an extensive mine sweeping program in connection with petroleum exploration in the Western Desert. Until the outbreak of hostilities in Egypt in October 1956, the company was actively engaged in clearing tracks, airstrips, campsites, drill sites, and survey lanes at widely scattered locations throughout the area. The accompanying map indicates the company's mine sweeping activity through September 1956.

The policy of the company has been to clear extensive areas only if they are to be used as campsites, drill sites, or airstrips. The majority of the sweeping activity has been devoted to clearing survey lanes or desert tracks to a width of 15 or 20 feet. Comprehensive area clearance

has been underteken or planned only for areas that have a high potential for petroleum production. There are known mined areas that the company does not intend to clear since exploration results indicate a low production potential. No definite schedule for sweeping activity has been set up because clearance has been closely associated with production programming.

b. Methods Employed

Two procedures have been used in the search for mines that constitute a danger to oil-company personnel. The most comprehensive method has been to search and clear the entire surface of tracks, airstrips, campsites, and drill sites. In addition, continuous lanes were cleared in rectangular patterns for use of survey parties. The lanes and tracks so cleared are indicated on the accompanying map by heavy continous lines. The airstrips, campsites, and drill sites on the map have been searched and cleared.

The second method has been employed to provide spot clearance for gravity survey parties. The area to be surveyed was laid off in a rectangular grid and then surveyed by a team transported by helicopter. At preselected points the helicopter hovered near the ground as a spot check was made with mine detection equipment. If the survey station was considered clear, or had been cleared, gravity meter readings were taken. Lanes on which check of this type was employed are indicated on the map by a heavy broken line.

Only the searched and cleared areas along the survey lanes and tracks and at camp sites, airstrips, and drill sites were recorded and plotted. Some small areas between survey lanes have been checked or cleared, but

this activity has followed no definite pattern and no record of the scattered areas involved has been maintained.

When mines have been located, they may be detonated in place or removed and stacked for detonation. The company prefers to stack and detonate mines some distance from the area to be used because the pieces of steel left after detonation may be picked up by detectors at a later date.

c. Marking of Cleared Areas

Most of the areas searched and cleared by the oil company have been clearly marked on the ground. Desert tracks and lanes that have been cleared and are safe for survey parties are outlined by piles of stones or dirt. Cleared areas in the vicinity of camps, drill sites, or airstrips are identified by flags, rows or stones, or piles of stones and dirt. It is believed that survey lanes traversed by helicopter and given only a spot clearance are not marked on the ground. No ground identification was made for certain other small, widely scattered areas that were searched or cleared on a spot basis.

B. World War II Minefields

Relatively little information is available on exact locations of British and German minefields in Egypt, but millions of mines were placed during the battle for Egypt. The shifting nature of the engagments in this area reduces the value of the few minefield plots available at this time. The information, largely from German sources, is considered accurate as of a specific date during World War II, but it is probable that the fields were partially cleared, relaid, and extended by the British and/or Germans a number of times after the original information was recorded. The only

conclusion it is safe to draw from those data is that the areas were once mined and should be considered dangerous until proven clear.

1. The El Alamein Area

All available intelligence indicates that more mines were laid during the extended period of fighting near El Alamein than in any other sector of the battle for Africa. The Germans estimate that their defensive line contained some 500,000 mines, and it is believed that British mining was more extensive. Because of the intricate patterns of minefield defenses south of El Alamein, no attempt has been made to approximate the position of individual minefields in this sector on the accompanying map. Evidence of defensive positions, such as the barbed-wire obstacles that are closely associated with minefileds, is clearly visible today south of El Alamein. In the vicinity of El Alamein the entire area from the coast south to the Qattara Depression should be considered dangerous. Movement off the lanes cleared by the oil company or off well-traveled tracks should be avoided if at all possible.

2. The Mersa Matruh Area

Extensive German minefields were placed west of Mersa Matruh between the coast and the escarpment that lies some 20 miles inland. The information on this area is as of June 1942, during the final German approach to El Alamein.

3. The Sollum Area

German minefields were laid from a point on the coast a few miles south of Sollum southward and westward for a distance of about 25 miles. These fields cross both the Libyan border and the barbed-wire fence erected by the Italians near the border. This "wire" extends all the way from the

coast to the Oasis of Giarabub more than 50 miles inland. German records also indicate the position of known and suspected British minefields south and east of Mersa Matruh.

4. The Siwa Area

A few miles north of Siwa, American personnel discovered a previously unreported minefield that straddles the track due north from the oasis. The extent of the field is not known.

IV. Libya

A. Mine Clearing Activity

1. British and Libyan Operations

Libyan Police and the British Army in Libya have been concerned over the mine problem for some time, but they have not been able to carry out comprehensive mine clearing programs. Royal Engineer Headquarters in Tripoli have attempted to maintain records of known minefields, and the Tripolitanian Police Force has produced a handbook dealing with mined areas of Tripolitania that incorporates Royal Engineer information as well as reports from the local population, many of whom have been killed by mines and booby traps.

In Tripolitania, two attempts to clear mines are known to have been undertaken. In 1949 the Royal Engineers began to clear mines, but the work was stopped almost immediately, because of the death of two British soldiers. In 1942 the Tripolitanian Police Force initiated a program that was to be supervised by a former British Army mine expert. It was anticipated that Royal Engineer mine-detection equipment would be available and that the operation would be joined by a private firm that would, in return for services rendered, be permitted to take possession of all mines

recovered. No information is available on the outcome of this project; if the program was actually placed in operation, it is judged that sweeping activity was confined to more heavily populated and traveled coastal areas.

No information is available on British or Libyan programs in Cyrenaica, but the Royal Engineers have reported that all towns, populated areas, and main roads have been cleared. Again, it is assumed that this report concerns areas immediately adjacent to the coast and that little attention was given to the problem in inland areas. The first comprehensive effort to search and remove mines in the interior of Libya was initiated under the direction of major oil companies in 1956.

2. Oil Company Operations

a. Extent of Programs

Several oil companies were actively engaged in mine sweeping operations on widely scattered concession areas in the summer of 1956 /see accompanying maps of Libya/. Petroleum companies with concessions in Libya have formed an Inter-Company Safety Committee to serve as a clearing house for information on mined areas and clearing activity, but mine sweeping operations have been conducted by individual concession holders. The first phase of clearing programs, still underway in some areas in October 1956, consisted of sweeping access tracks to concession area. This was followed by sweeping lanes across the concession in rectangular patterns for the use of survey crews. Pending evaluation of survey findings, it is planned to conduct comprehensive clearance of potentially productive concession areas. Clearing parties have been active on

12 concessions, but only fragmentary information is available on the precise location of mine-cleared areas within the concessions.

b. Methods Employed

Mine clearing teams varying in size from 3 to 19 men have been operating over predetermined routes in and near concession areas. Tracks or survey lanes have been cleared to a width of about 15 feet. On this basis, a 19-man team was able to clear an average of only about 3.6 miles of track per day. Mines found have been either exploded in place or removed and stacked for detonating, or the charges have been burned after removal of the detonators. Methods of disposal of individual mines have been conditioned by the type of mine encountered and the skill and experience of the personnel.

In most instances clearance of continuous tracks and lanes has been undertaken, but areas between the lanes and tracks have not been searched. In the concession that borders Egypt in extreme northeastern Libya, a helicopter has been used in clearance work for survey teams. It is likely that only selected stations on the survey route have been searched and cleared in this area, and that no attempt was made to sweep a continuous lane through mined areas.

c. Marking of Cleared Areas

The lanes and tracks cleared by oil-company ground parties have been clearly identified with either flags or rows of stones. It is probable that piles of stones or dirt have also been used to mark the limits of cleared areas in some instances. No information is available on the identification of stations along the Egyptian border that have been checked and cleared in conjunction with the use of helicopters.

B. World War II Minefields

Many of the minefields in Libya have been identified through army records and accounts of postwar civilian casualties. In many instances, no record was made by units placing mines, and the existence of mined areas was revealed only by casualty reports. Discoveries of mines have been made along well-traveled routes that were previously considered entirely safe. Mines placed for harassing purposes by withdrawing units may be found in the most unlikely places by observant individuals in the field. The only known mines south of 26°N are reported in the vicinity of Bir Graf (26°28'N-15°49'E), El Gatrun (25°57'N-14°38'E), and Uau El Kabir (25°20'N-16°42'E). It is not safe to discount the threat of mines anywhere in northern Libya.

On the following pages, some of the mined areas of Libya are listed alphabetically and described. Most of the textual information is for Tripolitania; unfortunately, very little is available for Cyrenaica. Mined areas--both in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica--that are not covered in the listing are indicated on the accompanying maps at 1:1,000,000. Areas discussed in the listing are identified on these maps, and insets at 1:500,000 are provided for 14 areas in Tripolitania. Grid references, such as (R)R5132, that appear in the listing are based on the LIBYA ZONE GRID (BROWN) for Libya north of approximately 27°N between 11°E and approximately 23°E. The LIBYA ZONE GRID (BROWN) appears on the 14 insets as well as on topographic maps of Libya at 1:500,000 and larger.

AREA: Barce

LOCATION: 32°31'N-20°54'E

AVAILABILE INFORMATION:

The airstrip immediately north of the settlement of Barce, bounded on the west and northwest by the Barce-Wadi Cuf-Derna road, was reported ploughed and mined in 1943.

AREA: Beni Ulid (see Inset 4)

LOCATION: 31°45'N-14°00'E, (R)R2436

AVAILABLE INFORMATION:

An arc-shaped minefield circles around the town of Beni Ulid to the east, south, and west. The specific depth of the field is not known. Major roads and tracks passing through the field are believed to be clear, but not the shoulders.

The Beni Ulid airstrip at (R)R2236, about 1.6 km. south of Beni Ulid and just east of the Beni Ulid-Schemech road, was ploughed and mined in early 1943. The airstrip and perimeter are heavily infested with antitank and antipersonnel mines. The danger area extends to and includes the east shoulder of the Beni Ulid-Schemech road.

The road east from Beni Ulid to Bir Dufan was mined on both sides between Km 11 at (R)R3437 and Km 29 at (R)R4443 in early 1943. The road surface is clear, but all shoulders must be regarded as dangerous. Tracks joining the road between Km 11 and Km 29 from Beni Ulid must be treated as unsafe.

Derelict buildings in the vicinity of the road are heavily infested with mines and booby traps, particularly in the area known as Wadi Fadrag, (R)R3739, about 18 km. east of Beni Ulid.

In 1943 the road leading southeast towards Sedada that branches from the Beni Ulid-Bir Dufan road approximately 21 km. east of Beni Ulid, (R)R4341,

AREA: Beni Ulid (continued)

LOCATION: 31°45'N-14°00'E, (R)R2340

AVAILABLE INFORMATION: (continued)

was mined on both sides for a distance of approximately 2.5 km. southeast of the junction at (R)R4341.

AREA: Bir Dufan (see Inset 6)

LOCATION: 31°58'N-14°36'E, (R)R7963

AVAILABLE INFORMATION:

Six airstrips in the vicinity of Bir Dufan were heavily mined 1943. The extent of the perimeter mining of these strips is not known. The location of the Bir Dufan airstrips is as follows: No 1 at (R)R7763, No 2 at (r)R7667, No 3 at (r)R7766, No 4 at (R)R7765, No 5 at (R)R7768, and No 6 at (R)R7566.

Only the major tracks to Misurata, Zlitan, and Beni Ulid can be considered safe. The shoulders should be regarded dangerous.

AREA: Bir el Khorghia (see Inset 9)

LOCATION: 31°38'E-15°07'E, (R)82723

AVAILABLE INFORMATION:

The west side of the road leading north from Bir el Khorghia is mined in the area between approximately 5 km. north of Bir el Khorghia at (R)82728 and 15 km. north at (R)82737. The extent of the field is not known. The shoulders of the road are not confirmed as clear. Extreme caution is advised in the area west of the road.

Zarzur airstrip approximately 2 km. north of Bir el Khorghia on the west side of the road, (R)82526, was reported ploughed and mined in 1943. Unreliable sources report that it was swept in 1948, but recent information indicates that the area is still mined. The airstrip is identified by two concrete pillars 1.5 meters high that stand about 50 meters west of the road, and by the name "ZARZUR" in 20-foot concrete letters 75 meters west of the road.

AREA: Buerat (see Inset 11)

LOCATION: 31°2½'N-15°43'E, (R)X8496

AVAILABLE INFORMATION:

The town is mined to an undetermined extent in the vicinity of the wharf and is considered unsafe north of the main road.

A small minefield, not accurately located, has been reported near the track leading from the main road west of the town to the abandoned airstrip approximately 2.5 km. northwest of the town at (R)X8199. Present information indicates that the field is located to the east of the track. Pending further survey, the airstrip and approach tracks are considered unsafe. A large dump of loose mines, stacked in roughly rectangular form, has been reported in the same area and may be booby-trapped.

A major minefield crosses the main road from Buerat to Bugren and Misurata approximately 25 km. west of Buerat, (R)X6099. The field extends northeast towards the Mediterranean for about 10 km. and southwest approximately 30 km. and crosses the Ghoddahia-Bu Ngem road at (R)X4477. Loose mines may be seen near the Misurata-Buerat road. The shoulders of the road are unsafe.

AREA: Bu Ngem (see Inset 10)

LOCATION: 30°35'N-15°24'E, (R)K5006

AVAILABLE INFORMATION:

Extreme caution is advised within a radius of 5 km. from Bu Ngem Fort, an area of indiscriminate and unmarked mining. The airstrip, approximately 4 km. northwest of Bu Ngem Fort at (R)K4707, and the area west and southwest of the Fort were reported heavily mined in 1943; this was confirmed in 1948.

Minefields are located on both sides of the Bu Ngem-Hon track about 500 meters south of the Fort. The field covers an area of approximately 500 by 200 meters and is partly marked with barbed wire.

AREA: El Gheriat Es Shergia (see Insct 2)

LOCATION: 30°24'N-13°35'E, (W)A2692

AVAILABLE INFORMATION:

The area west of the town, including the edges of El Gheriat airstrip, approximately (W)A7292, is reported mined.

AREA: El Machina

LOCATION: 30°40'N-16°25'E (R)Y4917

AVAILABLE INFORMATION:

An airstrip in the vicinity of El Machine that has not been accurately located was reported heavily mined in 1943; the mining was confirmed in 1948. Caution is advised within 5 km. of 30°40'N-16°25'E, (R)Y4917.

AREA: Garibaldi

LOCATION: 32°23'N-14°52'E, (R)M9810

AVAILABLE INFORMATION:

A small mined area is located on the north side of the Misurata-Tripoli road 25 km. west of Misurata and 5 km. east of Garibaldi (R)M0309. The area is approximately 200 meters long by 150 meters deep. Telephone posts and lines are diverted to the north of the area. The mined area, confirmed in 1952, is fenced and posted.

AREA: Gheddahia (see Inset 11)

LOCATION: 31°22'N-15°14'E, (R)X3794

AVAILABLE INFORMATION:

The road and track junction at approximately (R)X3797, 4.8 km. north of Gheddahia, is reported mined to an unknown depth. The shoulders are unsafe. The road between Gheddahia and the junction at (R)X3704, approximately 10 km. north of Gheddahia, is mined; but reports on the area are conflicting. All approaches to Gheddahia are suspect -- the roads are safe, but the shoulders may be mined.

Small areas of nuisance mining are reported throughout the Gheddahia vicinity and south of the town as far as 30 km.

An extensive minefield crosses the Gheddahia-Bu Ngem road at (R)X4478, approximately 18 km. south of Gheddahia. Caution should be exercised for a distance of not less than 3 km. south of this point. Allied maps show this field as extending west for about 12 km. to approximately (R)X3377 and east for about 25 km. to approximately (R)X7474. German maps disagree with this information, but until disproved the Allied maps are considered correct.

The Gheddahia airstrip, located 5 km. northwest of the town at (R)X9499, was reported heavily mined in 1943; this was confirmed in 1948.

AREA: Homs (see Inset 13)

LOCATION: 32°38'N-14°16'E, (R)M4938

AVAILABLE INFORMATION: All abandoned buildings in the area between (R)M4030 and the coast should be regarded as suspect, including the large fort on the hilltop overlooking the Homs-Tripoli road. A minefield is thought to run from the north side of the fort towards, and possibly as far as, the coastline.

A number of very general reports have been made concerning a mined area 12 or 13 km. west of Homs in the vicinity of the road junction at (R)M4337. This field is probably associated with the antitank ditch that crosses the Homs-Tripoli road about 1 km east of (R)M4337. Until further clarified the Homs-Tripoli road in the vicinity of (R)M4337 and the Homs-Kusaibat road from (R)M4337 to a point 3 km. to the southwest should be considered mined. The road surface is cleared, but off-road movement is dangerous.

AREA: Hon (see Inset 12)

LOCATION: 29°06'N-15°56'E, (W)E9855

AVAILABLE INFORMATION:

An Italian minefield is reported on both sides of the road leading north from Hon to Bu Ngem. The field begins in the outskirts of Hon and extends 4 km. northward. Extreme caution should be exercised in the area, and movement at night is not recommended. The mined areas are incompletely and ineffectively marked. Some parts of the field have been covered by drifting sand.

The Hon airstrip, immediately east of the town and south of the Hon-Zella track, is thought not to be mined, but considerable numbers of mines have been found around the airstrip perimeter, particularly to the east and south.

Large numbers of bombs, shells, mines, and other explosive materials have been reported at many points in the Hon area. These objects may be booby-trapped.

AREA: Mizda (see Inset 1)

LOCATION: 31°26'N-12°59'E, (R)Q2310

AVAILABLE INFORMATION:

Mizda airstrip, located immediately south of Mizda Fort at (R)Q2309, was mined by the Italians in 1943. It is thought that the strip, an area of about 250 by 430 meters is mined. Isolated mines have been found between the strip and the fort, indicating that the perimeter also is mined. No clearance has been reported, and a number of fatal accidents have occurred.

AREA: Nofilia (see Inset 14)

LOCATION: 30°47'N-17°50'E, (R)Z8525

AVAILABLE INFORMATION:

The perimeter areas of Nofilia airstrip, 21 km. northeast of Nofilia at (R)Z9828, were reported mined in 1943.

Chindel No. 1 airstrip, 10 km. northwest of Nofilia at (R)Z8236, and Chindel No. 2 airstrip, 14 km. northwest of Nofilia at (R)Z7638, were reported heavily mined in 1943. The area surrounding these two airstrips should be regarded as dangerous from (R)Z8333 to (R)Z7537 on the north side of the Gos-Sitre road.

AREA: Pisida

LOCATION: 35°05'N-11°46'E, (Q)P9715

AVAILABLE INFORMATION:

A minefield is located on the Tripoli-Tunis highway between 16 and 17 km. west of Pisida at approximately (Q)K0204. The field extends northeast to the coast and south for approximately 1 km. Near the coast, large quantities of derelict ammunition have been reported. Livestock casualties have occurred in the field.

AREA: Sedada (see Inset 7)

LOCATION: 31°32'N-14°47'E, (R)R9413

AVAILABLE INFORMATION:

The Beni Ulid-Sedada road was mined for a distance of 10 km. east of the road junction at (R)R6931, 32 km. northwest of Sedada. Both sides of the road are believed to have been mined. The shoulders are dangerous.

The track passing through Sedada is mined on both sides from the road junction at (R)R6822 north of the settlement to a point approximately 3 km. south of Sedada at (R)R9310.

The Sedada airstrip northwest of Fort Sedada at approximately (R)R9313 was heavily mined in 1943 and was reported as still mined in 1948.

AREA: Sitre (see Inset 3)

LOCATION: 31°11'E-16°35'E, (R)Y6574

AVAILABLE INFORMATION:

The town of Sitre and the surrounding area within a radius of 4 km. was mined in 1963 to such an extent that it is not possible to define mined and mine-free areas. Mines are still being reported within the town area. The danger zone includes an airstrip lying immediately south of the town. The strip and its perimeter, which extends east to the edge of the Bueret-Nofilia road, are heavily mined. In 1953, a vehicle was destroyed along a stretch of this perimeter.

AREA: Tarhuna

LOCATION: 32°27'N-13°40'E, (R)18917

AVAILABLE INFORMATION:

A minefield has been reported immediately southeast of Tarhuna along both sides of the old Beni Ulid road, and the location is variously given as anywhere from less than 1 km. to more than 6 km. southeast of the town. Reports on this field have been both confirmed and discredited. It is believed that a number of pockets have been mined and that the entire area should be treated as dangerous.

AREA: Tauorga (see Inset 8)

LOCATION: 32°02'N-15°09'E, (R)S3167

AVAILABLE INFORMATION:

Tauorga airstrip at (R)S2160, immediately east of the Misurata-Ruerat road and 9.5 km. southwest of Tauorga, was reported as partly mined in 1943. The extent of the mining is not known. Piles of loose mines were reported near the northern boundary. Reports indicate that the mining extends eastward and southward from the vicinity of the ruined Carabinieri post on the main road near (R)S2160. The southern shoulder of the track from (R)S2160 should be regarded as unsafe.

AREA: Wadi Tamet

LOCATION: 31°25'N-16°18'E, (R)Y2376

AVAILABLE INFORMATION:

Tamet East airstrip, at 31°12'N-16°11'E and (R)Y2875, was reported mined in 1943; this was confirmed in 1948.

Wadi Tamet airstrip, at 31°15'N-16°09'E and (R)Y2276, was reported mined along the eastern perimeter only.

AREA: Zella

LOCATION: 28°30'N-17°35'E, (W)P5878

AVAILABLE INFORMATION:

A field of Italian box mines crosses the Zella-Tagrifet road between 5 and 8 km. north of Zella. The field, approximately 60 by 15 meters, was found to be marked with barbed wire in July 1954.

Another field of Italian box mines crosses the Zella-Tazerbo road between 4 and 6 km. southeast of Zella. The field, approximately 30 by 3 meters, was found to be marked with barbed wire in July 1954.

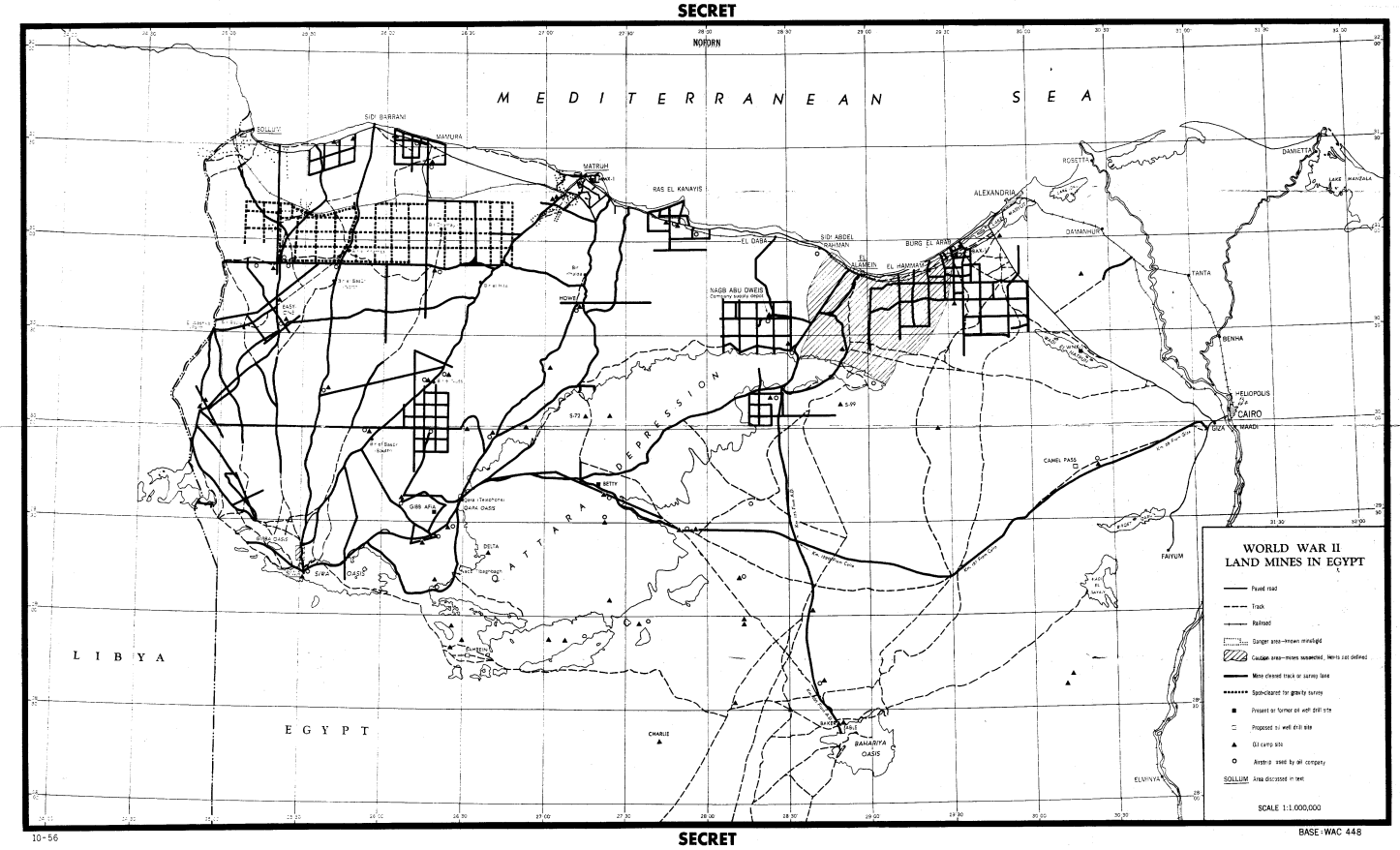
AREA: Zliten-Misurata Area (see Inset 5)

LOCATION: 32°18'N-14°43'E, (R)R9090

AVAILABLE INFORMATION:

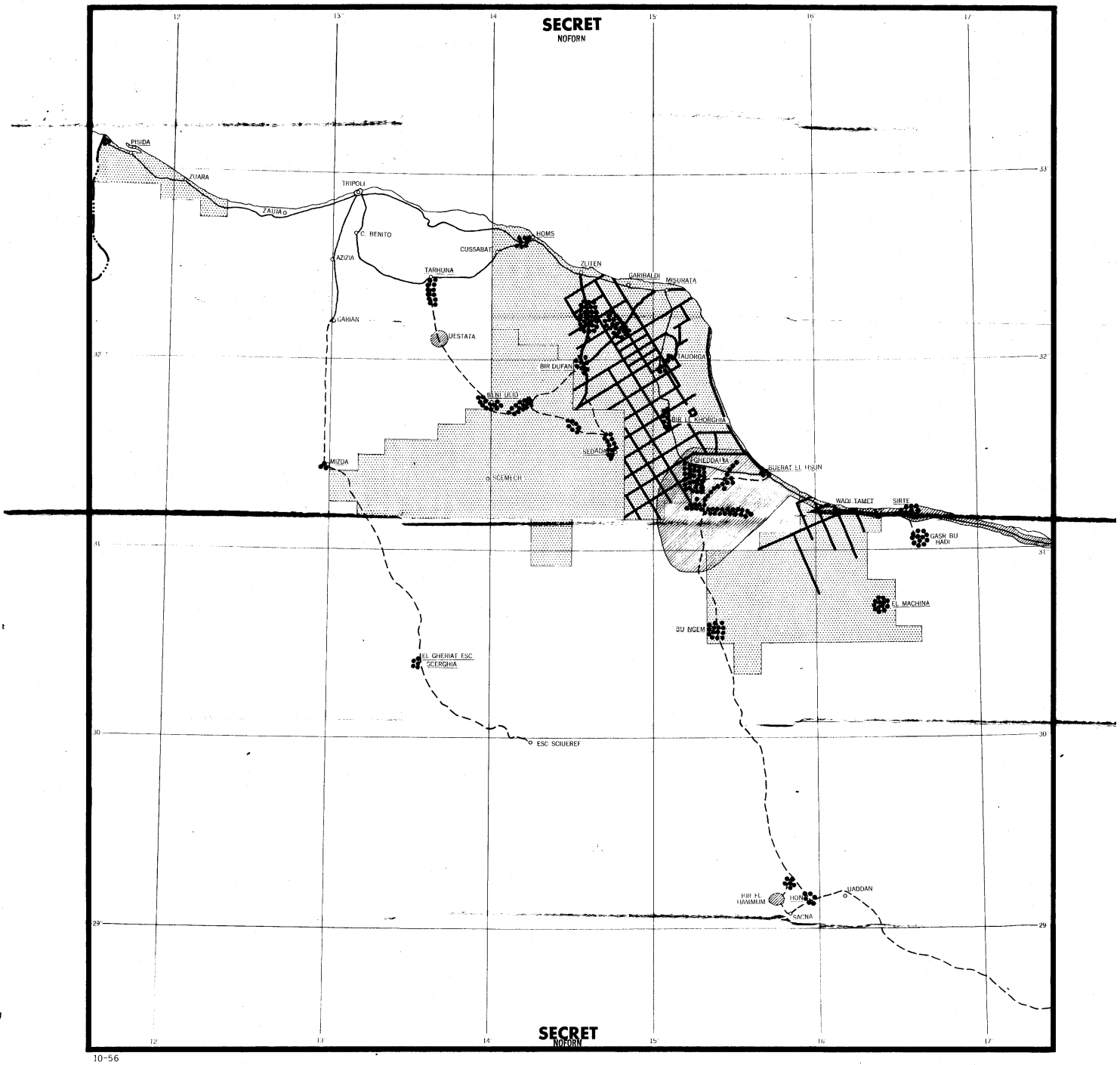
Extreme caution is advised southwest of Misurata on the northwest side of the Misurata-Bir Dufan road, at (R)S0290, between Km. 32 and km. 42, at (R)R9782. Many mines were placed to a distance of 10 km. northwest of the road and 6 Km. southeast of the road. The area includes three abandoned airstrips: Gardabia Main at (R)R9688, Gardabia West at (R)R9288, and Gardabia South at (R)R9881. An unconfirmed report indicates that these airstrips may be wholly or partly mined. Fused heavy-caliber German aerial bombs have been removed from time to time from perimeter areas.

Mines are suspected along the Zliten-Bir Dufan road south of Zliten from km. 18, at (R)M8001, to km. 40, at (R)R8082. The area extends to a distance of 6 km. on both sides of the road and includes 6 abandoned airstrips: Sertan Main at (R)R8291, Sertan North, at (R)R8098, Sertan West, at (R)R7796, Hamascir, at (R)R8287, and Chiman, at (R)R8185. These airstrips may be wholly or partly mined. German aerial bombs have been removed from time to time from perimeter areas.



10-56

BASE: WAC 448



10-56

BASE: WAC 423 & 450

WORLD WAR II
LAND MINES IN WESTERN
LIBYA

Main road

Track

Danger area known minefield

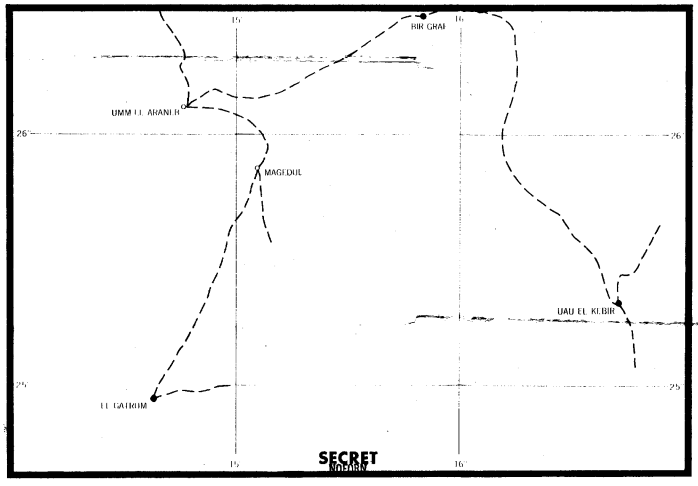
Caution area mines suspected, limits not defined

Mine cleared track or survey line

SIRTE Area destroyed in text

Boundary and in which some clearing has been conducted

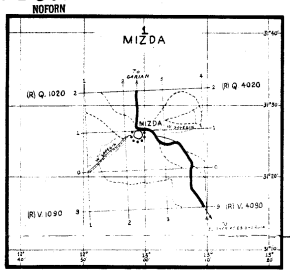
SCALE 1:1,000,000



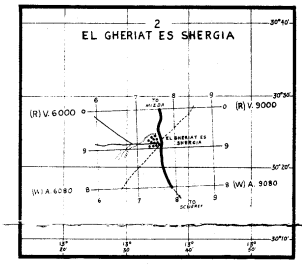
INSETS OF MINED AREAS IN LIBYA

SECRET
NOFORN

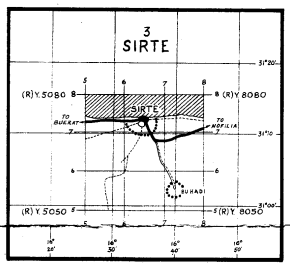
1 MIZDA



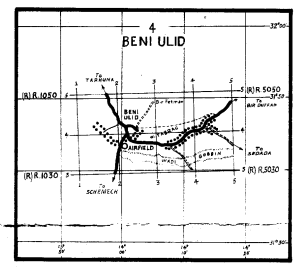
2 EL GHERIAT ES SHERGIA



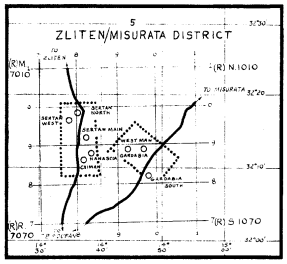
3 SIRTE



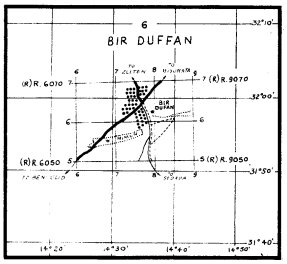
4 BENI ULID



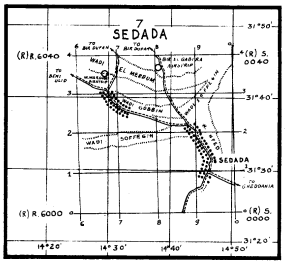
5 ZLITEN/MISURATA DISTRICT



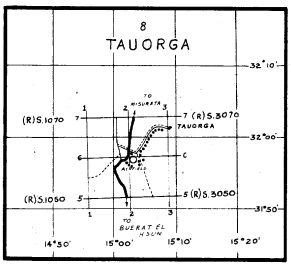
6 BIR DUFFAN



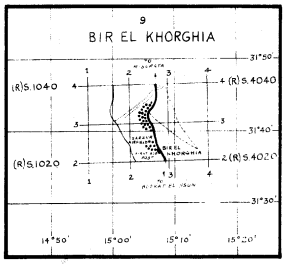
7 SEDADA



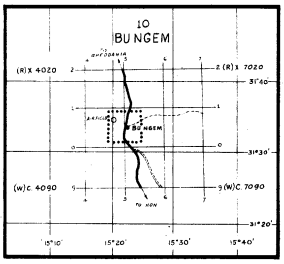
8 TAUORGA



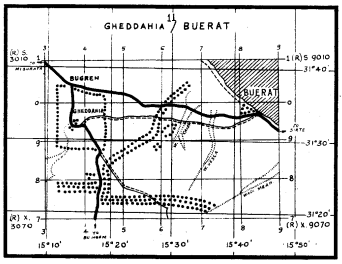
9 BIR EL KHORGHIA



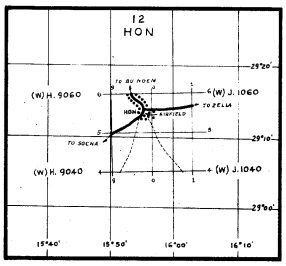
10 BUNGEM



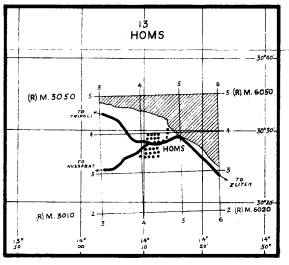
11 GHEDDAHIA / BUERAT



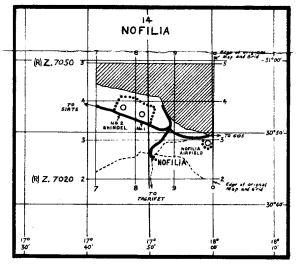
12 HON



13 HOMS



14 NOFILIA



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